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# Course Director Teaches Medical Homeport Model Across Navy Medicine Enterprise

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My goal is to ensure that we deliver a top-notch product for commands and leadership with our course.

**By Lt. Cmdr. George Coan**

Hello, my name is Lt. Cmdr. George Coan and I'm the course director for the Navy Medicine Clinic Management Course. Before I get started, let me first share with you a little about my background and experience.

I grew up as an Army brat, living throughout the world and attended eight different schools before graduating from Lake Braddock Secondary School in Burke, Virginia, in 1995. One of my most memorable school experiences was living in Canberra, Australia, from Year 9 through Year 10 (yes, that's 9th and 10th grade for us Yanks). Wow, Australia is a beautiful country with some amazing people! They sure do talk fast and abbreviate just about everything. There is even a "Dinkum" Dictionary of Aussie English for all of their favorite words and various meanings. I left Australia in 1993 and can't wait to take my family there for a visit. More on my family in a minute.

After high school, I graduated from James Madison University (JMU) in Harrisonburg, Virginia, in 1999, and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Medical Service Corps. I studied health services administration and business at JMU and immediately applied my undergraduate experience to my Army life...not really.

You see, my first assignment was as a medical platoon leader in a light infantry battalion where I was basically was in charge of 35 medics. Not much health care administration going

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on there from an academic sense, but boy did I learn some of the best leadership lessons of my life with these men who provided medical support to the infantrymen.

My first real boss was then Lt. Col. Burke Garrett (now a 3-star General), and he told me something that I will never forget. He said, “George, as you advance throughout your career, never forget who you support.” In the context of the conversation, he was telling me to never forget supporting the warfighter. We exist in military medicine, regardless of which branch of service or specialty, to support the warfighter and their family. As I have advanced throughout my career, I have witnessed at times how leaders can forget this simple, yet critical concept. We must always remember who we serve.

So why am I now in the Navy? Great question. I met my beautiful wife, Erin, at a bar in Honolulu. Yes, at a bar. When we first met, she was on a Navy scholarship that paid for her medical school at the University of Virginia. I was still stationed in Hawaii, she was in Pensacola for flight surgeon school- the Army and Navy could never get us stationed together. So I inter-serviced transferred to the Navy Medical Service Corps in 2006 (yes it took two years for the paperwork to get approved.) Erin is a comprehensive ophthalmologist at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) and we both absolutely love serving our country in Navy Medicine.

Fast-forward to 2012. We just spent 6 glorious years in San Diego and transferred to the Washington D.C. metro area to be stationed at WRNMMC. My new job, boom, you guessed it, is as Director of the Clinic Management Course. Now this is some exciting stuff. I basically get to travel to every major Navy hospital throughout the world to teach a strategic initiative that is very near and dear to our Navy surgeon general’s heart- and that my friends is teaching the Navy medical homeport model to physicians, nurses, healthcare administrators, corpsman and civilians.

We teach various concepts from big-picture stuff like how the Military Health System is organized to more basic concepts as foundations of clinic management, tips and tricks in using our electronic health record, accessing data-mining websites and ensuring the best access to care for our beneficiaries in Navy Medicine. These are just some of the concepts and lectures that we teach in the course. I highly recommend checking out our website, which gives details on how to attend and where we will be teaching the course in the near

future: <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmpdc/courses/Pages/Clinic%20Management.aspx>

You might not think about it, but there are many logistical details involved in running a course of this magnitude. I coordinate about 10 courses a year, with a faculty of about 25-30 members, and we ship 50-60 laptops to each training site. Each course has a different faculty team and there are always hiccups along the way...travel, schedules, personalities. love being the integrator between the faculty members, hospital leadership and students. There are truly leadership challenges at every moment. I also enjoy meeting the students at each hospital. My goal is to ensure that we deliver a top-notch product for the command and leadership with our course. I always meet with the senior leadership of each hospital before the course to review what we will teach, as well as after the course to go-over any significant issues or recommendations.

I am about to teach a course in Naples, Italy, in early May and this will be my 26th course. I have had the pleasure of teaching more than 1000 students at every major hospital in Navy Medicine. My last course will be in June at Oak Harbor, Washington. My family and I will then head out to our next assignment in Hawaii. Yes, Hawaii, and with warmest Aloha, I’m signing off. Oh, one more thing, I have two amazing sons, Oliver (3) and Andrew (1). We are blessed.

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